

I wish to turn my subject toward them by saying Dear friends, in the building up of character in others we must mind that we do the foundation work well. Sunday school teachers are those who do the foundation work; for they begin first with young hearts, while they are tender and susceptible. It is a most important thing that we have our children and young people well instructed in divine truth and soundly converted. Fundamental truths are as much connected with the salvation of a child as with the salvation of a full-grown man. Christ receives adults, but He also suffers little children to come to Him. Let us always take good heed that our Sunday school teaching is as truthful as our instruction in the church.

But it is never forgotten that the major part of teaching will lie in example; and therefore, the life of the teacher must be of the very best. It is wonderful how children copy the conduct of a beloved teacher: for good or for evil, the force of example over the imitative faculty of youth is very great. When their hearts are tender they are moulded for God and good things, as much by what they hear from our lips. Most of you have seen in the British Museum the Egyptian brick which bears the mark of a dog's foot upon it. When it was as yet soft mud, a dog, who was wandering through the brick-field, set his signature upon it, and there it—*Dog of Nilus: his mark*. And casual word or foolish act may make a mark on a child's character as indelible as the dog's signature. This may be done when we are not intending it: how much more when with our heart's intent we write upon a loving mind!

A BIBLE CLASS TEACHER.

I remember a man of God, who has now gone to his reward, who was the means of producing, under God, a library of useful lives. I do not mean books in paper, but books in boots. Many young men were decided for the Lord by his means, and became preachers, teachers, deacons, and other workers, and no one would wonder that it was so, if he knew the man that trained them. He was ready for every good word and work; but he gave special attention to the Bible-class, in which he set forth the gospel with clearness and zeal. Whenever any one of his young men left the country town in which he lived, he would be sure to have a parting interview. There was a wide-spreading oak down in the fields; and there he was wont to keep an early morning appointment with John, or Thomas, or William; and that appointment very much consisted of earnest pleadings with the Lord, that in going up to the great city the young man might be kept from sin, and made useful. Under that tree several decided for the Saviour. It was an impressive act, and left its influence; for many men came, in after years, to see the spot made sacred by their teacher's prayers.

But, beloved friends, one of the most important things about dealing with children is, that we teach them what we have well prepared. Their mental food must be carefully cooked. If ever a teacher goes to the class without preparing the lesson, the teaching is sure to be very poor work.

NOBODY SEES YOU

preparing your lesson; nobody commends you for your diligent research. It is the public address which is noted; but the secret study is that to which the commendation really belongs. If the private preparation is neglected, it is a very serious omission. Indeed, bad work in places which are not looked at is a wretched order of things. Some time ago it fell to me, as executor, to arrange for the sale of the goods and effects in a house most elegantly furnished. Certain fine pictures were to go to Chrsiy and Manson's. The drawing-room was expensively adorned, and the wall decorations were elaborate with a pattern in which gold stars were somewhat plentiful. When the paintings were taken down, I was not a little surprised to see that behind them the wall was bare of ornament, so at no time could those pictures have been shifted without showing how the decoration had been stinted. The owner was rich; yet his tradesman must needs practice such pinching economy of a little gliding. I am afraid if we were to take down some of the pictures in some Sunday-

school teachers and Christian ministers, there would be seen ugly patches of neglect.

See to it that your heart and soul is worked into your teaching. Next time we are studying the Scripture lessons, let us think to ourselves, 'This is foundation work. No one will know how I have worked at it; but the Lord, whom I serve, will take note of all that I do, and he will be pleased with conscientious foundation work.' Brethren, we must put 'good stones, costly stones, and hewed stones' into the unseen part of our edifice.

III. My time fails me; but under my third head I must carefully, though briefly, set forth the reasons why this should be done. It is

A WISE METHOD.

First, because it is suitable for God. You build your temple for God, and not for men: you should therefore, make that part of the building good which will be seen by him; and as he sees it all, it must all be of the best. A Grecian sculptor had to prepare an image of a god for one of the temples. He was working away with all his might at the back of the head, and at the hinder garments of the figure. One said to him, 'Your work is needless, for that part of the figure is to be built into the wall.' 'But,' said he, 'the gods can see in the wall.' Let us catch the spirit of the heathen artist, and do work for God in the manner fit for the Omniscient.

Next, look well to the foundation that is out of sight, for your own sake. No builder can afford to be negligent over the unseen part of a building; for it would involve a serious injury to his character. The very act of

SCAMPING IS DEGRADING

and mean, and lowers a man's tone. I do not care who he is, if he habitually trifles over that which is not seen, the habit will defile his sincerity in other respects, and lead him to practical hypocrisy in religious concerns. The bare idea that we need not do our best if we are not seen, is debasing to the soul. Today many aim at doing things cheaply, getting through work as fast as possible, and making a great show for the money. Let us avoid this popular form of lying. 'Why,' saith one, 'nobody would respect you any less if you did such work slightly, for every body else would do so.' Listen: I should respect myself the less if I scamped my work, and I set a great value upon my own respect of myself. A conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward men, is of more worth than applause.

Further, lay the foundation well, and look to that part which is out of sight, because in this way you will secure the superstructure. There was a bit of a flaw in the foundation, but nobody saw it; for the builder covered it up very quickly, and ran up the whole concern as quickly as possible. The walls were built, and built well. It seemed clear that the

FAULT DOWN BELOW

was of no consequence whatever; and as it had a little cheapened the underground construction, was it not so much the better? How long was that the case? Well, the next year nothing happened; a longer time passed away, and then an ugly crack came down the wall. Had there been an earthquake? No: there was no earthquake. Perhaps a cyclone had beaten upon the work? No: there was no cyclone; the weather was the same as usual. What was the cause of that gaping space which marred the beauty of the building, and threatened to bring it down? It was the blunder long ago: the underground neglect produced the terrible mischief above which would involve a great expense, and perhaps render it needful to take all the building down. If today you do not teach your children the gospel fully and clearly, the evil may not be seen in your present classes, nor, possibly, even in the generation; but children's children will bear the impress of the slight work.

Beloved, lastly, do look well to the foundation, and to the secret part of your dealings with God, because there is

A FIRE COMING

which will try all things. 'Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire

shall try every man's work of what sort it is.' No matter where we build, nor how we build, the fire will come upon all the works of man. The wood, hay, and stubble builders cry, 'Do not bring any fire here! The proposal is horrible!' But in vain do they protest, for God has determined that the fire shall be. Now, even should you build the upper and visible part of your life with stone, it would not avail if the under portion is of hay. The fire will bring it all down. A life well grounded in Christ Jesus, made sound throughout by the power of the Spirit, will bear to be inspected of God, and even be inspected by envious eyes of men, who would fain find fault with it; and at last it will bear the trial of the judgment-day, and will be found to the praise and glory of God for ever and ever. Therefore, see to it that you lay the foundation of all your religion with 'great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones,' that so it may last for ever.

Without Christ.

It is sad to think how many people there are that are living apparently at ease in this present world, without the heart preparation for ease in the world to come. They do not realize what it is to live without Christ, that they have no hope of eternal life, with the certainty of death before them and they know not how soon. It must be a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God in such a condition. If it were possible, who would not spurn into oblivion, the thought of death in such an hour. But it must be faced, and too, without a guide, or a ray of hope, into the regions of utter darkness and despair. Who can describe the anguish of a soul in that hour!

O sinner, should you chance to read these lines, you would shrink from such a death, yet you continue in your downward course, defiant of all that has been done in your behalf. Earnestly think for a moment that the Lamb of God was slain for you, even for you, that the prayers, the eager desires of dear friends are constantly ascending to the Great God in your behalf. God's word also teaches that Christ will come in the clouds of heaven, taking vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the gospel of Christ.

When the Judge descends in might
Clothed in majesty and light,
When the earth shall quake with fear
Where, O where wilt thou appear?

O sinner, whoever and wherever you are, ask yourself this serious question. How dare you run the risk of living unprepared, how can you rest. Your fellow beings have fallen by your side, and some, too, unprepared for the sad event. Let your thoughts revert to the scene, recall the then almost subdued emotions of your rebellious heart, cherish them with the beams of divine affection, until they lead you to a new and higher life. There is no necessity of living in unhappiness, misery and fearfulness, no need of living or dying unprepared. A way has been provided, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

No longer reject or neglect such wondrous love, for should you once be in possession of that blessed hope, you would not give it up, even one short day, for all the combined treasures and pleasures this earth affords. Again I entreat you, flee the wrath to come. Work while it is called today, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.

'All yesterday is gone.
Tomorrow is not your own,
What day is better than today.
To bow before the throne,
O! why should you delay,
And not to God return.
How sad to have your oil to buy,
When you should have it burn.
O hear his voice today,
And harden not your heart,
Tomorrow with a frown he may,
Pronounce the sound, depart.'

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Men feel inwardly disposed to thank God for improvement in their outward circumstances. Why do they not feel a still greater degree of gratitude when a beautiful, holy thought originates in the, suggestion of God himself?